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LESSON LEARNED

Exercise Conduct: Recruiting Full-Scale Exercise Volunteers

SUMMARY

Exercise planners can increase full-scale exercise (FSE) volunteer recruitment by contacting Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) and/or local colleges that have programs related to emergency response, such as nursing programs. More volunteers often make exercises more complex and realistic.

DESCRIPTION

On June 7, 2005, Volusia County, Florida hosted a FSE simulating a man portable air defense systems (MANPADS) attack on a commercial airliner departing from Daytona Beach International Airport. The purpose of the exercise was to improve cooperation between agencies likely to participate in a Volusia County ocean mass casualty incident.

The scenario involved two surface-to-air missiles striking a MD-88 aircraft carrying 80 persons. After being hit, the aircraft clips a beachfront resort and scatters debris and passengers across the water adjacent to the resort. Several victims die on impact, while others are injured on the beach, in the ocean, and in rubble produced from the airplane/resort collision. Anxious family members and friends arrive at the site after the crash, causing more problems for emergency responders.

Exercise planners had to recruit at least 90 volunteers to act as "victims" during the FSE. Planners focused their recruitment efforts on two groups:

- **Area colleges:** Planners contacted faculty members at two local colleges, Daytona Beach Community College (DBCC) and Bethune-Cookman College (BCC). They focused their efforts on DBCC and BCC programs related to emergency response, such as those in the DBCC's Department of Nursing & Dual Enrollment.
- **CERT:** Prior to the FSE, exercise planners met with CERT leaders and asked for their help in recruiting. CERT leaders solicited individuals from several public service groups, such as 4-H and Boy Scouts of America, to act as victims.

These recruitment efforts resulted in 140 volunteers. This high number allowed exercise planners to include additional "injects," such as incident site "souvenir hunters" and "walking wounded," in the FSE. All volunteers received a certificate of participation following the FSE.

Exercise planners can increase FSE volunteer recruitment by contacting CERTs and/or local colleges that offer programs related to emergency response, such as nursing programs. Planners might also give out certificates to exercise volunteers as a gesture of appreciation.

CITATIONS

- Callea, Donna and Ihuoma Ezech. "Beachside 'Plane Crash' Test of Skills." *Daytona Beach News-Journal Online*. June 8, 2005.
- Mauney, James. Deputy Fire Chief, Volusia County Emergency Management. Interview with *Lessons Learned Information Sharing*. July 13, 2005.

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